

apologetically sentimental in the song line. Senia Chostiakoff, who has appeared twice on the programme during this last week, seems to prefer his that way. And the other evening I inadvertently listened to "Musical Dramatizations of Famous Songs" from 3YL. Maybe the title was misleading in the absence of any other form of drama; anyway, I was misled. I have only a vague recollection of the songs involved, but I think the first was called "Just A-Wearyin' For You," and I know that they finished up with "Bird Songs at Eventide." Who or what was dramatized—and why—remains a mystery which I for one do not intend to investigate. But if radio plays, either the BBC or the NZBS variety, are in short supply, it seems a pity that local dramatic societies cannot become more radio-conscious and step into the breach. That would be a Good Thing all round; good for the societies, good for the listener, and good for the standard of plays. And maybe there wouldn't be room then for Famous Songs to be Musically Dramatized any more.

Crumbs Only

THE Easter season was responsible for some very welcome programmes from Christchurch stations—Bach's "Passion" from the Cathedral Choir, organ recitals by Dr. Bradshaw, and from 3ZB a recording of Stainer's "Crucifixion," with the names of Richard Grooks and Lawrence Tibbett to add their ever-popular magic. One item listed in 3YA's programme I was especially glad to see. It was the Prelude and Good Friday Music from *Parsifal*, relegated—Heaven and the programme organisers know why—to 9.0 a.m. Even if you did see the entry and manage to hear it, it was a very small crumb indeed. Wagner-lovers are fed only very small crumbs—usually limited to *The Flying Dutchman* Overture and excerpts from *Tristan and Isolde*. Which is all wrong of course: you should be stuffed with Wagner, saturated in him, and—to change the metaphor back again—fed with such large chunks that the grandeur of the whole must penetrate. Wagner is not everybody's "cup of tea"; but I am very much inclined to believe that in this case at least it is not necessary to be a Wagner-lover. It requires no more than a little imagination to appreciate the sheer splendour of *Parsifal*.

Impossible Tasks

MUCH has been heard lately about the vast Antarctic continent and its importance in that mythical future known optimistically as the post-war world. When a radio speaker has actually visited these icy wastes with one of the expeditions of Admiral Byrd, his opinions must be listened to with a deal of respect, and Bryan O'Brien from 4YA certainly had definite opinions on the subject "Can Mines be Worked in the Antarctic?" In brief, his talk amounted to a gigantic negative. The colossal difficulties of getting men and equipment down there in the first place, the brevity of the season during which work would be possible, the physical and psychological handicaps of life in the Antarctic, the natural inimical hazards of ice, snow, and blizzard—all were dealt with in detail, and the imagination of the listener boggled at the impossibility of the task. It would be interesting if the same speaker would continue with these talks, dealing more fully with the

ANOTHER RADIO CASUALTY

"MEMORANDUM for . . . Please ring Mr. Crane urgently; 'phone 25-580," ran a message left on the desk of a member of the Commercial Division of the NZBS the other morning. It had the true departmental ring, so he rang. The Zoo answered. It was April Fools' Day. And that was about the only piece of April fooling we heard of in radio this year. Ever since the Commercial stations came on the air 10 years ago, April 1 has been breakfast meat to them. For the entertainment of their listeners, they have perpetrated various seasonal hoaxes, some maddeningly simple; others elaborate in preparation and effect. One year thousands of listeners rose at an early hour and searched their letter-boxes for a pot of cream which, it was announced the night before, would be there as a free gift from an enterprising firm. The announcer's subsequent explanation was that it was vanishing cream.

strategic, meteorological and scientific possibilities of the region, subjects which he had, perforce, to treat in this talk with scant mention.

"Maori Music"

IN a programme from 4YA we had an interesting arrangement of items—first, a European orchestra playing Maori tunes; second, a native school choir singing European music in Maori and English. Gil Dech's arrangement of the more



popular airs sung by the Maori is well known by now to listeners, but it is far from being that elusive quantity known as "Maori music," since it is obvious that it has been arranged by the skilled hand of a musician who wants to appeal to the more sophisticated pakeha listener, and knows how to do it. On the other hand, the Te Horo Choir, even

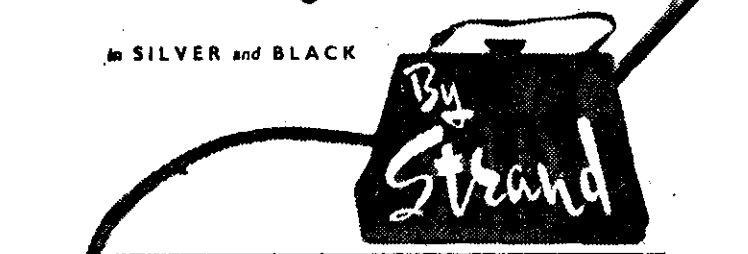
when singing "O Who Will O'er the Downs So Free," sounded more Maori than the most typical Maori melody in the orchestral arrangement. This remarkable primary school choir possesses some lovely voices, and has the added asset of a genuine bass line. But by the very quality and production of the voices, its appeal is so strikingly and pleasantly Maori, that it seems a pity that such talent must rely for its material on English part-songs which are not altogether suited to this style of singing. One wishes for the miraculous appearance of a native composer who could write a few genuine folk tunes for these young singers; then we should have something really indigenous and just as delightful.

SOME small boys in Essex have thought up a very good idea. They have formed a club to help housewives carry their parcels and shopping baskets: the subscription is 2d a week, and they see to it that their members behave themselves. Anyone who gets 10 black marks against him is disqualified—not only from carrying the parcels, but also, presumably, from the share of "tup-pences."—Georgie Henschel, in a talk in the BBC's Pacific Service).



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